PARENT'S SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL STATUS AS A CORRELATES OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN BENUE AND NASSARAWA STATES

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Abstract

The study investigated the parent's social and financial status as correlates of academic achievement of Senior Secondary School Students in Benue and Nassarawa States of Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted correlational survey design. The population of the study consisted of 53, 676 SS2 Students, while the sample size of 1,072 students from 10 out of 571 public Secondary Schools in Benue and Nassarawa States were used for the study. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select the respondents. Two instruments were used to collect data. These are: Home Environment Inventory (HEI) and Students Academic Achievement Report (SAAR). HEI consisted of 14 items while the Student Academic Achievement Report (SAAR) consisted of the SS2 Students final year scores in English Language and Mathematics in 2020/2021 academic session. Cronbach Alpha method was used to established internal consistency and it yielded 0.91. Data were analyzed using Pearson Product Movement Correlation Coefficient to answer research questions and to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that parent's financial status has direct and positive relationship with academic achievement of Senior Secondary School Students while parent social status has no significant relationship with academic achievement of Senior Secondary School Student. It was recommended that parents should develop and improve their financial status since low financial status constitute a threat to payment of students School fees and purchase of learning materials which could have negative impact in the Academic Achievement of their children. While parents with low or high social status should create emotional climate that is favourable for their children's learning.

Keywords: Financial status, Social Status, Academic Achievement, Education, Correlates

Introduction

Transition from secondary school to tertiary institution in Nigeria is based on the student's academic achievement. The process of teaching culminates in assessment or evaluation and the end point of evaluation is academic achievement. Regrettably, academic achievement in secondary schools' examination in Nigeria has been declining over the last ten years. Admittedly, Secondary education which tertiary institution is built upon is expected to produce graduates who should be able to maintain high and sensitive position so that the laudable national objectives can be realized. Education of Secondary School level is supposed to be the base and foundation toward higher knowledge in tertiary institution. Sadly enough, in the recent time the product of this citadel of learning can no longer compete favourably with their counterpart from other part of the world. This is in spite of many educational reforms, polices, measures and programs that have been put forth by the present

and successive Government in Nigeria. These unpleasant states of affairs have consequences both on the Students, Parents and the Nation.

Academic failure is not only frustrating to the students and the parents, but has adverse effects on quality of man power in all sphere of economy and polity. Students who perform poorly at school maybe under a lot of stress thus develop different selfless and thoughtless-childish way to cope with the generated stress. Other children will internalize (suppress or hide and accumulate) their feelings, leading to headaches which usually starts as mild and later become severe and almost out of control. Teachers too are worried about the poor achievement because, there is a saying which goes does, "the success of a teacher depends on the success of his/her students". This is why teachers, parents, government and the general public have been concerned and expressed the opinion that the poor academic achievement is hindering the prosperity of the Nigeria Nation. Asikhia, (2010), Otoja (2014) and Ugwu (2016), asserted that the prevalence of poor academic achievement seems to have increased in the last two decades.

However, the incidence of poor academic achievement is not peculiar to Nigeria alone. For instance, Gillan (2017), reported a declining in academic achievement among Secondary School students in New York in 2016 from 62 % to 54 % on an average. Similarly, Botswana student's academic achievement has also been declining at an alarming rate despite government huge investment in education (Luke, & Mhlauhi, 2010). Also, the Sierra Leoneans have lamented over the outrageous poor academic achievement at the recently 2018/ 2019 released West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE). It was reported that more than 95% of the students who took the examination in Sierra-Leone failed or did not obtain the five credits required for admission into university. In 2017, about 40% of the students did not obtain a single credit and only 5% had five credits in Sierra Leone (Usman 2019). In similar vein, it has been observed by West African Examination Council (WAEC) that the level of academic achievement among secondary school students in Ghana in recent times has also been very low (WAEC 2012). WAEC noted that the average achievement of students in Ghana has continued to decline rather than improve. This has become worrisome to the Ghanaian government.

In Nigeria, the rate of student's academic achievement since 2019 in the West Africa Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) conducted by West African Examination Council (WAEC) has been dismal. hovering around 22-38 percent. For example, in 2006, 22 percent of the candidates made credit passes above five credits including English and mathematic. In 2007, the number dropped to 20 percent, it improved to 26 % in 2008, remained the same 26 percent in 2009, and dropped again to 23 percent in 2010. In 2011 Nigeria achieved 30 % pass rate in the examination, improved on it to 38.81 percent in 2012, the nation's best achievement in six years, only to begin another downward journey in 2013 when the result was 36.5 percent and further down in 2014 with 31.28 percent but improved slightly in 2015 with 38.6 percent. In 2016 and 2017, the achievement improved to 52.97 and 59.22 respectively. However, in 2018 WAEC authority declared a decline of achievement to 49.98 percent. This dwindling academic achievement in Nigeria is also a source of concern to the stakeholders in education industry. In the same manner, Adersalu (2015), reported that the May/June 2015 West Africa Senior Certificate Examination results for Plateau State shows

that only 38.68 % (616, 370) out of the 1, 593,427 candidates that sat for the examination obtained five credits and above including English Language and mathematics. The situation was even worst in Kogi State where only 14.27 percent of candidates who sat for the West Africa Senior School Certificate examination for 2014/2015 made a minimum requirement for admission into higher institutions.

In Benue State the incidence of poor achievement in both Senior Secondary School examination and Junior Secondary School Examination has also been seriously criticized. Yakubu (2017), reported that out of sixty-one thousand one hundred and thirty-three candidates (61,133) who sat for the West African School Certificate Examination in Benue State only thirteen thousand, seven hundred and thirty-five (13,735) passed while forty-seven thousand three hundred and ninety-eight (47398) candidates failed representing 26.85 versus 73.85 percent. This appears a worrisome situation. Otoja, (2014), also reported poor achievement in Junior Secondary School Certificate Examination (JSSCE) between 2013-2017. In 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017, academic session, only 32.3 %, 40 % 41 %, 38 % and 33 % respectively of the students who sat for JSSCE in Benue state passed at credit level (A1-C6).

Nasarawa State also shares in the predicament of poor academic achievement as reported by Osuo-Siseken (2020). The percentage of candidates with five (5) credits and above including Mathematics and English Language is 13.69%, 26.79%, 54.70%, 37.54% and 25.12% for the years 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018 respectively. This shows poor academic achievement. Similarly, Benue State and Nassarawa State achievement in the 2015 WAEC rating stood at 16th and 23rd position respectively out of 36 states and Abuja. This is a clear indication of poor achievement in the zone. (Yakabu 2017). In a related development, the statistics from Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) about the achievement of Secondary School students also shows a worrisome situation. The statistics of the JAMB shows that between 2015-2018, 6.443, 868 candidates who sat for University Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) scored below 200 despite the desire of a majority of them to study highly competitive courses that requires more than that. The above scenario nationally and especially the two states Benue and Nassarawa are quite frustrating and depict poor academic achievement and a thing of concern for the researcher as it threatens the quality of secondary education which is supposed to be the bedrock for further education.

Magnuson, (2014) sees academic achievement as the extent to which a student, teacher or institution achieve their short or long-term educational goals, Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) and completion of Educational Bench Marks such as Secondary School Certificate, diploma and Bachelor Degree represent academic achievement. This trend of poor academic achievement among secondary school students has been attributed to several factors. Okam (2012), Eze (2014), Ugwu (2016), have attributed poor academic achievement in secondary schools' student in West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) to shortage of teachers, deficiency in teachers' preparation, lack of appropriate textbooks, poor financing of education, parenting styles and poor teaching strategies or techniques employed by teachers. Igho (2014) considered, peer pressure, broken home, inferiority complex, drug addiction and lack of parental care and affection as factors responsible for poor academic achievement among secondary school students.

In a similar vein Wilson, (2019) posits that home environment is much more important than school environment in influencing student's academic achievement and that the contact between parents, teachers and students makes a lot of impact in the academic achievement of students. It is unlikely for academic achievement of any child to be separated from the home environment in which the child grows up. The home environment is considered a powerful influence on the child. A home environment is viewed as consequential for child developmental outcomes such as cognitive ability, school readiness, academic achievement and emotional adjustment (Fantuzzo 2013). The nature of the social status of the parent, and financial status of parents are some of the elements of home environment that were investigated by the researcher to determine the level of their relationship to academic achievement. Parents who provide a warm, responsible and supporting home encourage exploration, stimulate curiosity and provide learning materials, accelerate their children intellectual development which on the long run increases academic achievement. In this study, the researcher chooses to investigate, two variables of home environment. These are, parent's financial status and parent's social status.

Parent's financial status refers to the level of income into which individuals are categorized or ranked. Parent's financial status are divided into three classes i.e high financial status, centre financial status and low financial status. Parents with high financial status have profound influence on the educational opportunities available to their children and offer better chances of educational success. Parents that are privilege economically or financially inspire a high level of academic achievement in their offspring. Indeed, such parents offers a higher level of psychological support for their children through enriched atmosphere that promote and encourage the development of skills required for success in school.

Among the several factors that have been linked to students' academic achievement at school is the parents' social status. Social status is the relative rank that an individual holds with attendant rights, duties and life style in a social hierarchy based upon honour or prestige. Status may be ascribed – that is assigned to individual at birth without reference to any innate abilities (sex, age, race, family or birth) or achieved requiring special qualities and gained through competition and individual effort eg (education, occupation, marital status accomplishment or other factors).

Social status determines access to material services and institutions. Parents with low social status are more predisposed to a high level of frustration in their children and these children are more likely to have poor verbal development and exhibit level of distractibility and hostility in the classroom which will negatively impact on their academic achievement. Sometimes, education of children of low social status are disrupted due to parents' inability to provide adequate school related materials like books while others are made to abandon education altogether to help with parent's vocation. This study will look at how social status as related to academic achievement.

Academic achievement has become an index of a student's future in this highly competitive world. It has become one of the most important goals, of the educational process. It is also a major goal which every individual is expected to perform in all society because, it is a key mechanism through which students learn about talents, decent abilities and competencies which are important part of career aspirations. However, neither self-concept

nor home environment has been conclusively supported by literature as the primary predictor of academic achievement in these past researches (Ekanem, 2014).

Statement of problems

Academic achievement is the end-product of all educational endeavours. The main concern of all educational efforts is to see how the learner achieves. Over the years, student's academic achievement in both internal and external examination have been declining and this has been a distressful phenomenon in Benue and Nasarawa states in particular and across the country in general. Basil (2017) observed that the poor academic achievement of students in school examinations like National Examination Council (NECO) and West African Examination Council (WAEC) is posing enormous problems to parents, government and other stake holders in education sector. Development of skills is very important for the students to survive and prove themselves in the highly competitive world. Statistics from the WAEC revealed that Benue and Nasarawa states came 18th and 25th in 2014, 17th and 23rd in 2015, 17th and 23rd in 2016, 19th and 34th in 2017, 20th and 21st in 2020, 16th and 26th in 2021, 3rd and 20th in 2022, 16th and 23rd in 2023 respectively from the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory Abuja. This level of academic achievement progression is clear evidence of poor academic achievement nationally. If nothing urgent is done to address the unwholesome scenario, this poor learning outcomes of students may led to very few candidates qualifying for admission into tertiary institutions. When students have leant the teacher has not taught.

Academic achievement of students as revealed has not been encouraging despite the provision of employment of qualified teachers and other enabling learning environment by the successive governments and the huge sum of money sunk to alleviate the ugly trend. One would naturally expect that these efforts should result to good learning outcomes, yet the scenario is still inherent in our educational system as manifested in the poor academic achievement among secondary school students.

Aim of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate parents, social and financial status as a correlate of academic achievement of Senior Secondary School students in Benue and Nasarawa States of Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the relationship between parents' social status and academic achievement of Senior Secondary School students.
2. Investigate the relationship between parents' financial status and academic achievement of Senior Secondary School students.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between parents' social status and academic achievement of Senior Secondary School students?
2. What is the relationship between parents' financial status and academic achievement of Senior Secondary School students?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between parents' social status and academic achievement of Senior Secondary School students.
2. There is no significant relationship between parents' financial status and academic achievement of Senior Secondary School students.

Methodology

This study adopted correlational survey design. This type of design seeks to establish what relationship exists between two or more variables. The design usually indicates the direction and magnitude of the relationship between the variables. The population of this study consisted of all the 53,676 SSS II students from all the 571 public Secondary Schools in Benue and Nasarawa States in the 2020/2021 academic session. This population includes 27,077 from Benue State and 26,599 from Nassarawa State respectively. The sample size for this study comprised 1072 Senior Secondary School students from 10 selected schools across the two States, (Benue &Nasarawa). Multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted for the study

Two instruments were used to collect data for this study. These are; Home Environment Inventory (HEI) and Student's Academic Achievement Report (SAAR). The instrument HEI is researcher's developed instrument while the SAAR is the SSS II student's final examination grade in Mathematics and English Language in 2020/2021 academic session. The HEI which is also divided into two clusters measure two indices of home environment thus: parent's social status and parent's financial status. The Home Environment Inventory (HEI) consists of 14 items, 7 measured parent's financial status, and 7 measured parent's social status respectively. The SAAR consists of record of final grade of all respondents in Mathematics and English Language for the 2020/2021 academic session. Academic achievement scores based on a scale between 1 (very high) and 4 below average were recorded and used for analysis. (Very high 1, High 2, average 3 and below average 4) The records were collected from the class teachers or designated school examination officers.

Cronbach Alpha method was used to estimate the reliability coefficient of the HEI and it yielded 0.91. The researcher obtained records of student's final grade in English Language and Mathematics for SSSII students from the class teacher. The researcher administered the questionnaire to the students in SSS II classes through the help of 10 research assistants to avoid wastage. The data collected from this study was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to answer research questions and test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussions

The result of data analysis and interpretation are presented according to the research questions and hypotheses formulated for the study. Data related to each research questions and hypotheses are presented on separate tables to aid comprehension of the analysis and interpretation of results. The data presented were analyzed using Pearson Product moment Correlation coefficient (r) to answer research question and test set hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule set for this study was that null hypotheses were to be rejected if they obtained probability value less than or equal to 0.05 and not rejected, if found otherwise.

Research Question one

What is the relationship between parent' social status and academic achievement of Senior Secondary School students?

Table 1

Relationship between Parent' Social Status and Academic Achievement of Senior Secondary School Students

Variable	N	Mean	SD	R	Remark
Parents Social Status	1072	2.09	0.30		
				0.204	Very Low Positive Relationship
Academic Achievement	1072	58.36	10.63		

Result in Table 1 reveals computed r of 0.204 indicating a very low positive relationship between parent' social status and students' academic achievement. The result shows that as parent' social status improves it may have very little influence on students' academic achievement. This implies that, improvement in parental social status may have very little impact on students' academic achievement.

Research Question two

What is the relationship between parents' financial status and academic achievement of senior secondary school students?

Table 2

Relationship between Parents' Financial Status and Academic Achievement of Senior Secondary School Students

Variable	N	Mean	SD	R	Remark
Parents Financial Status	1072	2.40	0.32		
				0.583	Moderate Positive Relationship
Academic Achievement	1072	58.36	10.63		

Result in Table 2 reveals computed r of 0.583 which means that moderate positive relationship between parents' financial status and students' academic achievement. This implies as parents' financial status improves, it may positively influence their children's academic achievement. This means that improvement in parents' financial status may moderately enhance their children's academic achievement.

Test of Hypotheses

The two hypotheses formulated for this study were tested at 0.05 level of significance using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. The results are presented in separate tables.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between parent' social status and academic achievement of Senior Secondary School students.

Table 3

Pearson Moment Correlation on the Relationship Between Parent' Social Status and Academic Achievement of Senior Secondary School Students

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r	Df	P-Value	Remark
Parents Social Status	1072	2.09	0.30	0.204	1071	0.098	Not Significant
Academic Achievement	1072	58.36	10.63				

Results in Table 3 reveals that r = 0.204, df=1071, p =0.098>0.05. Since p value of 0.098 is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between parent' social status and academic achievement of Senior Secondary School students is not rejected. This implies that there is no significant relationship between parent's social status and academic achievement of Senior Secondary School students. This means that high parents' social status does not in any way lead to high academic achievement of Senior Secondary School students.

Hypothesis two

There is no significant relationship between parent's financial status and academic achievement of Senior Secondary School students.

Table 4

Pearson Moment Correlation on the Relationship Between Parent' Financial Status and Academic Achievement of Senior Secondary School Students

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r	Df	P-Value	Remark
Parent' Financial Status	1072	2.40	0.32	0.583	1071	0.003	Significant
Academic Achievement	1072	58.36	10.63				

Results in Table 4 reveals that r = 0.583, df=1071, p =0.003<0.05. Since p value of 0.003 is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between parent's financial status and academic achievement of Senior Secondary School students is rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between parent' financial status and academic achievement of Senior Secondary School students. Therefore, the higher parents' financial status, the higher the academic achievement of Senior Secondary School students.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding revealed that, there is no significant relationship between parents' social status and academic achievement of Senior Secondary School students. This implies that the level of parents' social status does not affect the academic achievement of Secondary School students. This finding disagrees with the result of the Amazu and Okoro (2014) who

found a significant relationship between parents' social status and academic achievement of students in Aba, Anambra State, Nigeria. Conversely, the finding of this study is in conformity with the finding of Ogunshala and Adewale (2012) who found no significant relationship between parents' social status and academic achievement of students in Kwara State. The similarity in these findings could be due to the fact that parents' social status does not necessarily determine students' academic performance as this has been proven in Jennifer (2015) study where students from parents with low social class performed higher than those their counterparts from parents with higher social status.

The second finding of this study revealed that there is a significant relationship between parents' financial status and academic achievement of Senior Secondary School students. This means that a buoyant financial status of parents could determine the academic achievement of Secondary School students. This finding agrees with the result of Macheba, Ezegbe and Onuoha (2017) who found significant relationship between parents' financial status and academic achievement of students. Again, the finding of this study is similar to that of Odo, Ugwuanyi and Chukuari (2017) who found a significant relationship between parents' financial status and academic achievement of accounting students in Nigerian universities. The consistency in these findings could be due to the fact that parents' financial status has a profound influence on educational opportunities available to students and their chances of educational success.

The author argued that low-income parents or guardians potentially threatens the stability of the home environment which could negatively affect the educational achievement of their wards. Educating a child is capital intensive; consequently, parents' financial status is a significant factor that can influence students' academic achievement. Most often, students from good financial background resume earlier to school, pay school fees promptly, purchase needed school materials and such are more psychologically prepared to learn. Contrarily, parents of low financial status are more likely to be less responsive to the child's educational needs which could lead to low academic achievement and withdrawal from social participation with other children (Straub, 2018). This implies that, though, parents' financial status do not appear to be the major determinant for students' academic achievement, there is a tangible relationship between parents' financial status and students' academic achievement; low financial status of parents could therefore negatively affects academic achievement of students and vice versa.

Conclusion

The findings of this study established that parents' financial status have significant relationship with academic achievement of Senior Secondary School students. This implies that parent's poor financial status will poorly affect the academic performance of students and vice versa. Conversely, based on the findings, parents' social status has no significant relationship with students' academic achievement. The level of parent's social status is not a guarantee to high academic achievement.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Parents with high or low social status should try to create emotional climate that is favourable for their children's learning. This will help to improve students' academic achievement.
2. Parents should strive to improve their financial status since low financial status potentially constitute a threat to stability of home, payment of school fees, and purchase of learning materials which could have negative impact on the academic achievement of their wards.

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